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Student Politics at SUNY-Brockport: 1970-1980

By Adam Chamberlain

HST 390

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Dr. Bruce Leslie

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From 1970 to 1980, SUNY-Brockport was, like other colleges in the nation, an arena for political activism. In the early years of the decade, the student body had a distinct radical element, which had carried over from the late 1960s. The two prominent groups, the Black Student Liberation Front and the Revolutionary Student Brigade, led radical demonstrations and filled the pages of *The Stylus* and *The Weekly Planet* with their messages of societal reformation. Their impact reached a peak in 1976, and soon after, the radicalism dissipated. What took the place of such activity was a newer generation of college students, brought up with the notion that they would vote at 18 and be able to influence the system without having to fight against it. As well, political and world tensions were much calmer with the elimination of Nixon and his comrades in power and the end of the Vietnam War, thus student apathy towards political norms was residing.

The later part of the 1970s, until the Fall of the election year, 1980, marked a period of interest in electoral politics. While the 1976 election was briefly covered in editorial form in *The Stylus*, with no thorough reports until right before and after the event, the 1980 election graced the weekly newspaper much more often. Straw polls were conducted for both the Presidential and Senatorial race; student writers commented on the races with an eye on platforms and policy.

Furthermore, activity within Brockport Student Government remained constant throughout the period, although to a limited sector of the student body. The scandals, fiscal crises, and resignations were hot topics, year in and year out. Even more important were the debates surrounding increases in the mandatory fee and the many constitutions that were adopted and later disbanded, finally agreeing upon the 1978 model which is still in effect.

The State University of New York's College at Brockport was a shining example of post-secondary education in 1970. There was an active student body, increasing year-to-year, with a parallel addition of new faculty members in a wide range of liberal arts studies. This boom put Brockport on the map and made it the crown jewel of the SUNY system. In fact, its appeal was known nationwide; it was rumored that the college would be transformed into the next university location. In this cauldron of enlargement and participation, the vibrant political attitudes of the 1960s fomented, reaching a boiling point with the protests, violence, and burning down of the Black Student Union by the Black students themselves in the Spring of 1970. Student radicalism was high, and the tensions over the Vietnam War were bound to spill over into the new decade; nobody was sure how the activities on college campuses would shape the world. However, the aftermath of the spring of 1970 left a scar upon the face of Brockport, and it would become a critical decade for both student politics on campus and the institution itself.

Previous student papers have covered the political atmosphere of the 1960s at Brockport and the role of Brockport Student Government (BSG) from 1965 until the ratification of its current constitution in 1978. It seems, however, that the 1970s have not been evaluated through an overall lens of political activism, and it deserves to be. The period from 1970-1980 was highly politicized, from the end of the Vietnam conflict and the Watergate scandal to President Jimmy Carter's desire to call a draft in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. As well, there were three Presidential elections within the time-span (1972, 1976, and 1980). Unfortunately, it was also the period of Brockport's decline, hitting its top enrollment in the mid-1970s and beginning its downward spiral as lax admission's standards undercut Brockport's reputation as an elite SUNY institution. In such a climate, on what issues did the student body react, and how did they do so? Did they form political organizations to put forth their agendas? In general, how did political activism play a role in students' lives from 1970-1980? Sadly,

radical political participation on campus gradually declined, though problems with BSG over mandatory fees and a stable constitution and concerns surrounding election years, tuition/room rent increases, and cutbacks became the new, less violent epicenters of student action. To understand this trend, the first five years of the period in question, from the fall of 1970 through 1975, will be discussed in this paper, followed by a look into the transition years of the mid-1970s and a thorough examination of the late 1970s until the fall of 1980.

The early 1970s was, like the preceding decade, a period of intense political discourse at SUNY-Brockport. There was a small but determined group of radical, left-wing political activists who continued the new tradition of sit-ins, and they would, as Professor Stephen Ullman stated, attempt to enter lectures “through the backdoor” and demand that the Vietnam War be discussed, at the expense of class material.¹ In addition, these same students wanted to ensure student representation within academic departments at a ratio of approximately one student for every five professors, thus allowing them to influence decisions on tenure, salary, and curriculum. A quick glance through the pages of *The Stylus* of this era confirms such a trend; angry letters-to-the-editor, anti-war cartoons, and a general anti-establishment mentality permeated the periodical’s message.

All these actions required organization to be effective, and the structures were present for implementing radical student policy. The Black Student Liberation Front (BSLF) was by far the most notable group of the period. Founded on the basic principles and ideals of the Black Panther Party, the BSLF was directly connected with the controversies of the spring semester of 1970, such as the burning down of the Black Student Union and the protests that took place in response to Kent State, and had made its presence felt via BSG participation. Throughout the early 1970s, the BSLF also proselytized in *The Stylus*, utilizing several pages in almost every

¹ Ullman, Dr. Stephen. Interview by Adam Chamberlain. 30 October 2003.

issue to make their message clear. A good example of this practice was an article written by John McGuire, entitled “Black Students.” While the title reflects the content, the page itself is printed with multiple images of raised, intimidating Black fists.² Obviously, the BSLF was ready to continue the pressure they had been applying since the late 1960s to the “conservative” elements on campus.

Another radical group active at SUNY-Brockport was the Attica Brigade, later known as the Revolutionary Student Brigade (RSB). An offshoot of the Students for a Democratic Society that dissolved after the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, the Attica Brigade was founded in the very early 1970s under the guidance of Bob Avakain. The group would later change its name to the Revolutionary Student Brigade, which remained for the Brockport organization even after the 1975 name switch to the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade took place nationwide.³ Their offices, located in 111F Lathrop Hall, served as a base for operations, helping them to promote traditional leftist causes by holding working class celebrations on May Day, the world workers’ holiday,⁴ and educating the campus on women’s rights.⁵ However, until their sudden demise after the spring of 1976, the RSB did partake in radical activity, the most prominent example being confrontations regarding the recruitment of students by the Navy in October of 1974. In an unsigned article published in the *Weekly Planet*, the RSB claimed, “the struggle that took place with the military recruiters...was a victory!” Furthermore, the author ended the article with the line, “THE PEOPLE UNITED WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED! [as appears in article].”⁶

² McGuire, John. “Black Students.” *The Stylus*, 13 September 1970, pg. 9.

³ Watts, Tom. “The Student Left and Youth Liberation in the U.S.A.” June 1994. <http://proms.snu.ac.kr/~skkim/data/article/files/youth.html> (29 October 2003).

⁴ “The Working Class Will Liberate All Humanity.” *The Weekly Planet*, 29th April 1975, pg. 5.

⁵ “Celebrate International Women’s Day on March 8th.” *The Weekly Planet*, 4th March 1975, pg. 5.

⁶ “RSB: Revolutionary Student Brigade Speaks Out.” *The Weekly Planet*, 29th October 1974, pg. 4.

Other protest groups also existed during the early 1970s, such as the People's News Service and the Environmental Action Coalition, although their contributions were not as prominent as the BSLF and RSB. The latter two often joined together to reach common goals, and their ideological platforms agreed on third world education, women's rights, and equality for the proletariat.

Still, this does not mean radical groups did not have differences; one glaring example is in their written material. The BSLF students seem to have been prominent figures on campus, proud to be noticed and viewed as student leaders. Every article I viewed that was written by the BSLF had an author's name attached. Oddly, the RSB, as far as my sample can tell, never approved of telling the readers who wrote their articles, and *The Stylus*, in their interviews with members of the group, avoided names or simply listed the interviewee as a "spokesman."⁷ The group probably worked on a strict egalitarian basis that was concerned solely with the issues, not the added notoriety.

These student organizations, obtaining headlines in *The Stylus* and making waves on campus, were quite active, although they did not represent the majority of the student population. Professor Walter Borowiec reiterated the classic Spiro Agnew line that there was a "silent majority" in America's colleges and universities who were more concerned with course work and obtaining a degree than demonstrations and sit-ins.⁸ At Brockport, the Vietnam veterans remained quiet as well.⁹ For non-radical political activity, there were the Eugene "McCarthy's Kids" who were "Clean for Gene" in the 1968 election, but the Republicans were nonexistent organizationally. In general, the students and faculty might not have been radical, but the majority abhorred the policies of the Nixon administration and the crisis surrounding the

⁷ Ward, Hamilton. "RSB Rallies." *The Stylus*, 26 February 1976, pg. 1.

⁸ Borowiec, Dr. Walter. Interview by Adam Chamberlain. 7 November 2003.

⁹ Ullman, Dr. Stephen. Interview by Adam Chamberlain. 30 October 2003.

Watergate scandal. This is not to say that conservative elements were not present, for they did exist within certain non-social science departments such as physical education, economics, and mathematics/science.¹⁰ Furthermore, the general level of student intelligence seems to have been high as many bright, young New Yorkers flocked to Brockport, expecting it to become the next SUNY university center. Students were apt to debate politically and were concerned about problems in the world off-campus, thus leading to an environment that fostered political radicalism in some and a hard work ethic in others. However, the motivation for a career beyond college kept most students interested in their course work.

Unfortunately, Brockport was not able to sustain such an atmosphere for much longer. By 1975, the peak enrollment at the college had been reached, and students of a lower academic level were infiltrating the enlarged student body as Brockport President Albert Brown, starting in 1970, accepted rejected students in return for increased funding. Even worse, the dreams of a university center being placed within Monroe County vanished, leaving the once vibrant campus, poised to reach the upper echelons of New York State education, with little direction. It was in this milieu that political radicalism at Brockport made its final stand.

By the spring of 1976, the SUNY system was in a fiscal crisis, and Albany responded with monetary cutbacks, which lead to student tuition and fee increases to try and balance the books. The Revolutionary Student Brigade was one of the first groups to protest these government actions. *The Stylus* from February 26, 1976, ran a front-page column about RSB protests against a proposed \$100 hike in tuition and room and board costs at Brockport, with similar RSB demonstrations being held at the same time on the Oswego, Stony Brook, and Buffalo campuses.¹¹ Soon a Student Committee Against the Cutbacks (SCAC) was established, and they worked closely with the RSB to stage another protest that gathered 200 people outside

¹⁰ Borowiec, Dr. Walter. Interview by Adam Chamberlain. 7 November 2003.

¹¹ Ward, pg. 1.

President Albert Brown's office in early April.¹² In approximately one week's time, a third protest involved the RSB, SCAC, BSLF, faculty, and even the Student Senate.¹³ While these protests were initiated by the radical element, their message was, for once, one that many students could agree with; most students wanted to have their education costs as low as possible. If this were so, then what happened to campus radicalism? Would it make a resurgence?

By 1976, the Vietnam conflict had ended, and many of those who witnessed the activism of the early seventies were graduating or, in some cases, failing or dropping out. Also, President Nixon resigned, thus ending the crisis over the Watergate scandal. Students, in this period of relative calm, turned their focus to campus-oriented issues, as was the case with the 1976 protests. Fighting to keep tuition low had always been an area of contention between bureaucrats and students; therefore, with nothing else of importance to oppose, the SUNY system and administration became the prime target. For a good example of how protest changed, one can compare the early 1970s and the BSLF expressing anger in *The Stylus* and colluding with the RSB to the campaign waged in the fall of 1979 by Black students to include more courses that were not "irrelevant to their lives and disciplines."¹⁴ Obviously, the Black student body felt strong enough to put forth their views to the Brockport community, although organizational structure had diminished. The BSLF was no longer mentioned in article titles, and this particular reform did not have the society-altering implications of earlier BSLF activities, such as a campaign to free Angela Davis, who was a Communist Party comrade and implicated in a murder plot.¹⁵

The largest demonstration that occurred between 1976 and the fall of 1980 was the "Tent City Protest" during the spring of 1980. The university had set about to increase dorm rents, and

¹² Wiessner, Edward. "Students Rally at President's Office." *The Stylus*, 8 April 1976, pg. 1.

¹³ Wiessner, Edward. "Students Protest Budget Cuts." *The Stylus*, 15 April 1976, pg. 3.

¹⁴ Black, Dale. "Blacks protest course offerings." *The Stylus*, 9 November 1979, pg. 9.

¹⁵ Petraitis, Brian. "As her trial opens: Angela Davis from reality into myth." *The Stylus*, 23 March 1971, pg. 4.

this did not settle well with the on-campus students, as one would expect. In response, a “tent city” was established; each tent represented a different dormitory facility. Signs were hung from the makeshift living quarters, which read “Poor McLean,” “Poor Mortimer,” and so forth. In addition, the crowd reworded the famous “Hell no, we won’t go” chant to “No way, we won’t pay!”¹⁶ Similar rallies carried over into the spring of 1981, when a tuition hike was added to the mix of monetary increases. These actions, of course, were only a piece of the student political pie during the second half of the 1970s and early 1980s, for students began to feel the appeal of mainstream, within-the-system politics.

While the fact that 18-year old students obtained the right to vote through the 26th Amendment in 1971 might have left students of the early 70s un-socialized in the electoral process, the students of the later 1970s were aware of this power; they had grown up attuned to the concept of a younger voting age. It appears obvious, by looking through *The Stylus*, that by 1980 the Brockport campus was in step with the national Presidential election that pitted Ronald Reagan against the incumbent Jimmy Carter. Granted, this might have occurred later at Brockport than at other SUNY schools, for the 1976 Presidential race was not unknown to SUNY students. The Student Association of the State University of New York (SASU), a voluntary, representative body composed of students from participating SUNY schools, pushed for student participation statewide in 1976 by organizing a voter registration drive, and posters from SASU supported two separate candidates for President that same year, “Fred Harris For President ‘76” and the more biased “Vote Libertarian: Clark, President.”¹⁷ *The Stylus* of 1976, however, carried little valuable information concerning the Presidential campaign. This situation changed, and the Fall of 1980 witnessed *The Stylus* becoming thorough in their coverage and

¹⁶ Gould, Stacey. “Tent city protests increase.” *The Stylus*, 8 April 1980, pg. 1.

¹⁷ Kemble, Jean. *Archives of Public Affairs and Policy: SASU of New York Records, 1970-1980*. 14 July 2003. <http://library.albany.edu/speccoll/findaids/apap046.htm> (November 2).

conducting non-scientific straw polls of 100 students each to gauge candidate support. Not surprisingly, the Brockport students, near Election Day 1980, selected Carter as their choice, although an earlier straw poll had put third-party candidate John Anderson in first (Reagan placed dismally in both polls).¹⁸ Apparently, though the means of activism were different, the campus was still as unreceptive to conservative ideology in 1980 as it had been in 1970. While these results might seem insignificant, in light of the fact that the 1976 editions of *The Stylus* featured minimal coverage of the Presidential election, they serve to show how a new era of students was being socialized in a system that allowed them to participate, which was one reason why students stopped acting in radical ways. Students would continue to hold “rallies,” but the word carried more peaceful connotations than protest. Having the ability to vote places a person within the system, and by 1980, Brockport students who were interested in politics and the troubles of society had found an outlet through which the world could be changed without resorting to extreme measures.

Due to the atmosphere created by an end to governmental crisis and war, beliefs surrounding voting, and fears over career choices, radicalism declined at Brockport between 1970 and 1980 and was replaced with a more subtle, adhere-to-the-system approach to politics. Regardless, students throughout the era were consistently concerned with Brockport Student Government, and this area of student politics became a battleground for those who wished to be active in politics and student life. Wrangling over the BSG constitution was quite heated, and new guidelines for student government were drawn up and ratified in 1973, 1974, and once more in 1978, which is in existence to this day.¹⁹ The reasons cited in a graduate paper by Dave Gioseffi were “student radicalization and tendencies to adopt loose interpretations of the BSG

¹⁸ Morgan, Denise and Brooke Spiegel. “Brockport Students Choose Carter.” *The Stylus*, 5 November 1980, pg. 1.

¹⁹ Gioseffi, Dave. “Establishing a Student Centered Government at Brockport.” HST 691, SUNY-Brockport, Summer 1999.

constitutions,” and they were manifested in greater demands for student participation and the government’s involvement in social issues.²⁰ Interestingly, it would fit into the context of declining radicalism that, by 1978, the student body was fed up with revolutionary ideas and wanted a stable means of influencing campus life and politics. The students did not want their government involved in highly partisan debate, such as a 1973 resolution that demanded classes be cancelled to display solidarity with the Indian Rights’ Movement.²¹ Instead, BSG was meant to be a tool for improving opportunities on campus. Another important early debate (1972) that inflamed students was the idea of incorporating BSG; the mandatory activities fee would be equated to “stocks” in the government, thus solidifying a connection between the students and the institution.²² Continuing in the same direction, the 1973 constitution was thought to be the solution to this problem, allowing full student participation, hence the ability to collect the activity fee and please those who wanted to be involved. However, students were reluctant to pay the mandatory fee until lawyers determined that BSG had the right to force payment. In response to fears that such monetary support would result in an overbearing student government, a vote on the amount of the fee was required every four years, creating a legitimate check on the wild politics that were associated with BSG.²³

When analyzing BSG as the center for student politics, one must take into account the overall lack of participation that has plagued the system’s legitimacy since its inception. Part of this apathy stems from the continued instances of mismanagement and corruption that, to this day, plague BSG on an almost yearly basis. What does voting matter when the same results occur under administration after administration? The 1974 to 1978 constitution tried to remedy this, creating a Student Senate in which all Brockport students had a seat, but the system became

²⁰ Gioseffi, HST 691.

²¹ BSG Student Senate minutes. 22 March 1973.

²² Gioseffi, HST 691.

²³ Acosta, Heather. “Brockport Student Government: Are we Involved?” HST 390, SUNY-Brockport, 2000.

bogged down due to its sheer size and its weaknesses concerning by-law changes.²⁴ Closely connected with BSG's corruption was the mandatory fee and its increases; many students preferred not to pay the fee and live without some of the provided services. If the students had originally paid the fee, there would have been no purpose behind involving a lawyer to determine whether BSG had a right to collect it, and the system would have run smoothly. These two factors gave a large portion of the campus an excuse for not voting. As Heather Acosta noted in her paper, "gradually...student participation has diminished."²⁵ While this might be true, it had to decline from an already low level. A glaring display of nonparticipation was visible in an article headline from the February 6, 1973, edition of *The Stylus*, which read, "BSG releases fee poll results; 1,276 returns set new budget."²⁶ Five years later, a similar headline pronounced that BSG voting hit an "all time low."²⁷ Apparently, the right to vote in national elections was no guarantee that students would vote at any level of government. With dismal turnout, it is remarkable that BSG, with its incorporated status and wide breadth of powers when it comes to policy, has remained so powerful in the eyes of the administration and students. Needless to say, the term "silent majority" applies to BSG politics throughout the 1970s; it is not a unique aspect of radicalism.

An overriding concern, dealing with the research from *The Stylus* and *The Weekly Planet*, is if students became less studious as the 1970s progressed, as Stephen Ullman alluded to, then how did this impact political participation and information? What were the students basing their opinions upon? As the main news organ on campus, *The Stylus* served as an instrument of disseminating information, whether in the average news story or a scathing editorial.

Unfortunately, it did not always fulfill its duty. While the newspaper did cover campus life and

²⁴ Gioseffi, HST 691.

²⁵ Acosta, HST 390.

²⁶ Kranz, Ric. "BSG releases fee poll results; 1,276 returns set new budget." *The Stylus*, 6 February 1973, pg. 3.

²⁷ "Voting hits all time low." *The Stylus*, 27 September 1978, pg. 1.

events during the period in question, especially BSG, it is unclear to what point this information is biased. It would be beyond the scope of this paper to track down editors, BSG representatives, and regular students to try to get their perceptions of whether or not *The Stylus* was accurate, and after twenty or more years have passed, the truth might be too difficult to decipher. Regardless, it is apparent that national politics were not effectively reported for a majority of the 1970s.

Radical news on Ralph Nader or Angela Davis made appearances, but stories on electoral politics were few and far between until the 1980 election. The 1976 election was virtually absent from the front pages until articles were written on the subject in late October and early November.²⁸ There was a Libertarian advertisement, asking a single student to take the initiative in forming a Young Libertarian Alliance chapter at his school, but this was not a journalistic product.²⁹ Even worse, the only news article on Ford near the election year was from November 1975, a sad situation for a man who was President of the United States.

The 1980 Presidential election, which saw the addition of the nonscientific straw poll, was, at least, a step towards raising political awareness on campus. Another straw poll was conducted in September of the same year, dealing with the State's Senate race. Although D'Amato would succeed in his bid for election, the two opponents, Javits and Holtzman, came out on top. The student editors were either unaware of how unscientific such polls are, or, more likely, they were desperate for stories to fill the pages. Either way, they were a small segment of the coverage on the 1980 election and Presidential race. There was a "Campaign Corner" devoted to the election, particularly the Presidential race, and editorials that promoted voting (such as the blatant "Vote...Vote...Vote!") and student perspectives of the race. An article by John Heisner, "And in this corner...", used the metaphor of a boxing match to depict the

²⁸ The article titles were listed on the SUNY-Brockport College Archive website. In the archives, the pages have been ripped from the text. Therefore, the articles, from the 4 November 1976, were entitled "1977 and Beyond" and "Americans Elect Carter." No authors can be provided, and what the articles said is unknown.

²⁹ "Young Libertarian Alliance Ad." *The Stylus*, 1 April 1976.

Reagan/Carter competition for America's support, sarcastically ending the commentary by noting that he would not take part in the election because, "It's too complicated."³⁰ This witty rhetoric, though subtle, shows how far Brockport had come between 1970 and 1980, from an institution where radicalism was the prominent display of political activism to one at which comic relief was a welcome addition to political debate.

The year 1980 marked the official end of the 1970s and the dawn of a new era of conservatism that swept the nation. Yet the period was one of transition for student politics at SUNY-Brockport as campus radicalism slowly died off, giving way to mainstream, and potentially less violent, political expression. The early 1970s, which felt like a carry-over from the late 1960s, saw the RSB, BSLF, and other smaller organizations attempting to change society by waging war against a corrupt system, while the end of the decade dealt with keeping down tuition and dorm-rents, class schedules, and getting students to vote. Some might think that this meant students were less involved in the world, reluctant to speak out against the injustices around them. In fact, by 1980, the students had found how to do so within the political system, through voting, voter awareness, and a stable student government. When it came to issues, the 1979-1980 hostage situation in Iran, where radical students stormed the American embassy, was the first time in recent memory that the US could be classified as an innocent victim, and students would begin to debate the role of the United States in the Middle East while dealing with the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe. Therefore, as the 1980s began, SUNY-Brockport students were prepared to face the new decade and the shifting political environment by evolving their beliefs and attitudes over time, just as the case had been during the 1970s.

³⁰ Heisner, John. "And in this corner..." The Stylus, 1 October 1980, pg. 6, 16.

When starting research for the paper, I encountered no prior sources specifically geared to student politics from 1970 through 1980. One paper, written by Dave Gioseffi, did address the formation of BSG from 1965 to 1978, which was a solid base for the section of the my text devoted to Brockport's incorporated student government, and Heather Acosta's work on the current state of BSG was of some help as well. However, the remainder of my paper is original research through the college archives, the Internet, and personal interviews.

The main source of information was *The Stylus*, although the short-lived *Weekly Planet* was oddly insightful, containing several unsigned "propaganda" articles by the Revolutionary Student Brigade that put their mindset into perspective for me. The Internet, which seems to be the cutting edge technology, proved dismally inadequate for a case study, or a broader application, of student politics in the 1970s in the SUNY system. The SASU records, an archive at SUNY-Albany, seem to be well-documented, and basic information is available on their website. The RSB was mentioned only in papers about the future role of radical politics, written by activists in the 1990s, and I could find no webpage chronicling campus-to-campus organization (especially on the issue of tuition increase protests). Two interviews, with Professors Walter Borowiec and Stephen Ullman of the Political Science Department, were also helpful in obtaining general knowledge of the political climate at Brockport, and both are reliable sources.

The main problem I encountered during my research was a matter of how to limit the paper's scope. Writing a case study with a decade-wide span would have been daunting had I chosen to delve into every nook and cranny, and I ran the risk of becoming too specific in certain areas. For example, I had a desire to pursue more information about the Revolutionary Student Brigade, even though I suspected they were not the most popular, or effective, political organization on campus. Had I done so, my sections on BSG, the BSLF, and the late 1970s

would have been neglected. Therefore, it made sense to focus on a generalized overview, since no one resource yet existed on student politics during the period in question.

A second problem was the reliability of information from *The Stylus*. Today, people criticize the paper as flawed journalism, and I would suspect that this belief was common among the average student from 1970 to 1980. However, as I made clear in the body of the paper, gauging how students felt over twenty years ago would be difficult, and previous biases could bubble up to the surface when filling out a survey or during an interview. Along this line, would the results be similar if I had tried to find out more about the student body and its reactions to the BSLF, RSB, or the election campaign of 1980? What if my sample contained an overwhelming number of participants in these particular groups? Such worries, and the broad nature of the paper, were reasons enough for me to delay the potential conflicts arising from the addition of what could easily be classified as “biased” data.

In the future, detailed documentation of the various organizations and activities needs to be gathered. Student and faculty interviews, surveys, and even (if people reside locally) panel discussions would be perfect ways to see how the student populace remembers the politics of the 1970s, and the information generated would be beneficial to understanding the history of Brockport. While older faculty members should be targeted first, and for good reason, those who were youngest might have been closer to the student body, thus able to remember names of important individuals and events that went unreported. As for the specific organizations, a study of any of the acronyms, the BSLF, RSB, SCAC, SASU, or BSG, would be helpful. For those interested, possible interviews could be conducted with Dr. Getz, whom I was told might have good information, and Dr. Okoye, who was closely tied to the BSLF as chair of the African-American Studies Department (AAS). As for research, the RSB had affiliates throughout the state, and Bob Avakain was their founder. Also, knowing how outside-the-mainstream political

movements work, I would wager that someone from the RSB at Brockport is currently participating in a left-wing organization(s). Asking the right groups could result in a wealth of information.

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The Stylus material is obtainable at the SUNY-Brockport College Archives, and the two student papers (Acosta and Gioseffi) are available from the History Department. As well, online sources have their web addresses listed in their respective citations. The notes from the two interviews I conducted are in my possession, and I would be glad to turn those over to any future researcher. If I cannot be reached, both men (Borowiec and Ullman) are still teaching, with offices located on the second floor of the Faculty Office Building.